

## BACHMAN'S WARBLER BREEDING IN ALABAMA.

BY ERNEST G. HOLT.

*Plate IV.*

THE history of *Vermivora bachmani*, as one of the "lost species," of Audubon holds much of interest to the ornithologist. Discovered at Charleston, S. C., by Dr. Bachman in 1833, the bird was not taken again in the United States until 1886, when Charles S. Galbraith collected a specimen for millinery purposes near Lake Pontchartrain, Louisiana. In the spring of 1887, a specimen was picked up beneath the Sombrero Key lighthouse off the southern coast of Florida. Though these two captures stimulated the efforts of collectors, and the species proved to be common in Florida and Louisiana during migration, it was not discovered breeding until 1897 when Otto Widmann found nests in southeastern Missouri. Subsequently the species has been found breeding near Charleston, S. C., by Wayne, and in Logan County, Ky., by Embody.

As Widmann did not actually find nests in Arkansas, there are records of the breeding of Bachman's Warbler in three states only — Missouri, South Carolina, and Kentucky and it is with considerable satisfaction therefore that I am enabled to add a fourth — Alabama.

The species was not known to occur in Alabama until 1908 (cf. Saunders, *Auk*, Vol. XXV, pp. 416 and 421, October, 1908), but since 1912 it has been frequently observed in spring by Lewis S. Golsan, in Bear Swamp, near Autaugaville, and on Pine Creek, near Prattville. The bird had never been seen by me until May 25, 1919, when I was visiting "Laurel Pools" in Bear Swamp, southern Autauga County, with Mr. Golsan. An adult male was then observed singing, and a little later I almost ran over a nest in some low blackberry vines beside a path that Mr. Golsan had cut between two of the pools.

The nest, a bulky structure of dead leaves of white or red bay (*Magnolia* or *Persca*), some of which were skeletonized by insects, and herbaceous plant stems, was supported one foot above the

ground by the stems of five blackberry briars, three of which were dead. This loose outer nest, 6 x 7.5 inches x 4 inches deep, was lined with a closely woven cup of fine rootlets and the black skeletons of dead Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*), 1.75 inches deep by 2 inches in diameter. The nest was situated only 13 feet from the edge of the largest pool, in a small burned-over area covered with a thin, new growth of blackberry briars. The burn was surrounded by the virgin swamp growth of *Pinus taeda*, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Picris nitida*, *Ilex coriacea*, *Persea* and other hydrophytic vegetation.

The nest contained four eggs, three of them pure, glossy white, the other with a dozen minute dots of light brown, mostly about the larger end; all were tinted faint salmon pink by the yolks. The measurements in millimeters are: 15 x 12, 16 x 12.5, 16 x 12.5, and 16 x 13. There were only a few blood vessels in the eggs showing that incubation had only fairly begun.

The female warbler was sitting on the nest next morning (May 26) when we came to collect it and allowed us to approach within 6 feet, then it fluttered away among the low bushes. I collected the bird to make identification absolutely certain. The male was seen singing nearby but it was never observed to come lower than 25 or 30 feet above the ground. I agree with Embury, Wayne and Widmann that the song bears a great resemblance to that of the Chipping Sparrow.

This nest and set of eggs is now in Mr. Golsan's collection and the female warbler has been presented to Dr. A. K. Fisher.

*Sao Paulo, Brazil.*